Massachusetts Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary.

At the annual meeting of the subscribers to the Massachusetts Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary, the following Report of the Surgeons was voted to be published. The Managers have great pleasure in presenting to the public this evidence of the utility of an Institution which the State has aided by its liberality, and many of our benevolent citizens have contributed largely to establish and support.

It is due to the Surgeons, who devote so much of their time to the Infirmary, to state that their faithful services are wholly gratuitous.

The following are its officers for the present year:—

ROBERT G. SHAW	PRESIDENT.
J. WILEY EDMANDS	TREASURER.
JAMES LAWRENCE	SECRETARY.

Managers.

ROBERT G. SHAW.	MOSES GRANT.
HENRY RICE.	S. D. TOWNSEND.
J. WILEY EDMANDS.	SAMUEL HOOPER.
CHARLES H. MILLS.	J. HUNTINGTON WOLCOTT.
G. HOWLAND SHAW.	JOHN A. BLANCHARD.
W. W. TUCKER.	JAMES LAWRENCE.

Surgeons.

EDWARD REYNOLDS, M.D. | ROBERT W. HOOPER, M.D.

GEORGE A. BETHUNE, M.D.

JOHN C. SHARP	*Assistant Surgeon.*
MRS. MARY A. HOMER	*Superintendent.*

REPORT OF THE SURGEONS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS CHARITABLE EYE AND EAR INFIRMARY.

The Surgeons of the Massachusetts Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary beg leave to report, that, during the past year, the design of the Institution has been fully carried out, and the comfort and welfare of both in-door and out-door patients considered above every thing else.

There has been an increase of about one hundred patients over the number in last year's report, and the number of house-patients has been greater than in any previous year. Quite a number of persons afflicted with severe and with incurable diseases have come from a great distance, induced probably by the success of some more fortunate neighbors, with no clothing but the rags on their backs, and no money to get home again. Such persons have sometimes proved a burden that we knew not well how to dispose of; and, when not relieved by the Directors of the House of Industry, we have been forced to raise funds in the best way we could, without encroaching upon those of the Infirmary, which has only been done in one instance, for a poor scholar, a foreigner, who received assistance in the form of a loan, which he promised to pay when a better day should come. That day does not appear yet to have dawned.

In the Medical Department, every thing has been done with a due regard to economy; and the number of patients paying board has been greater than usual. A considerable expenditure has been required for alteration and repair in the heating and bathing apparatus of the north wing, under the sanction of the Managers; and the tin roofs of the wings have required repair and painting, — details not properly belonging to this report, — but as the necessity of attending to them, in the emergency, devolved upon one of our number, attention has been here called to the fact.

The whole number of patients for the year has been 1,911. Males, 1,023; females, 888; number with diseases of the eye, 1,574; ear, 337.

The number of patients from the country, 875; number from Boston, 1036.

House patients, number admitted	172
Remaining from last year	17
Whole number	189
Discharged	168
Remaining	21

The expenses have been for —

Salaries of Matron and Assistants	$450.00
Wages	494.00
Provisions	1068.76
Groceries	547.07
Medicines and Leeches	371.75
Fuel	542.50
Incidentals	100.53
	$3574.61

And about $400 in addition for repairs and alterations.

The new building in Charles-street is every thing that could be desired for the purpose for which it was intended; but the limited means of the Institution forbid our receiving as many patients into the hospital as sometimes need admission. It often happens that patients are obliged to wait until a vacancy occurs, or until some one is sufficiently convalescent to make room for a case more urgent. It is not that there is not room enough in the building, but that the number of free beds must be limited to the income; and, during the last year, that has been exceeded by several hundred dollars.

When the Institution was founded, about a quarter of century ago, it was to furnish medical advice and medicine to poor persons afflicted with diseases of the eye and ear: this was done at consultations held three days in the week, at a room in a central part of the city. The number of applicants increased so much, and some of the cases were of such a serious nature, that *more* than *advice* and medicine were needed, and previous to 1836 some of the patients were lodged in cheap boarding-houses, and there taken care of. Afterwards the old infirmary in Green-street came into the possession of the Corporation, and for about twelve years more the duties were performed there; but that house, at length, from its dilapidated condition and limited extent, became unsuitable, and the

present commodious establishment was secured by the generosity of private individuals, assisted by the Legislature.

To a person in health, pursuing his ordinary daily vocations, it would hardly seem possible that so many cases of diseases of the eye could exist in any community; but, if by chance one has a similar malady, his attention is directed to the subject, and he finds a goodly number afflicted in the same way. If his daily walks are among the poor, in the ill-drained, ill-ventilated, and crowded parts of the city, he will almost feel that to be free from these diseases is the exception; and it is precisely in such localities that diseases of the eye are extensively generated.

Since the commencement of the Eye Infirmary, more than thirty thousand patients have applied, and in the last few years the annual average has been two thousand. A little more than half of this number is from the city proper; many are from the suburbs, and from distances varying from a few miles to many hundred miles.

It is a charity well worthy of being sustained, and one that could not now be easily dispensed with. It has a durable foundation, a building that for many years will be all that can be wished, and in a locality the most desirable. It requires only a moderate, but a certain, income. The whole cost for about two thousand patients, the last year, was less than two dollars each. The great item of expenditure was for the maintenance of patients in the house, of whom the number was about two hundred.

It appears by the report of the Finance Committee, that the income for the next year may be estimated at not over thirty-two hundred dollars, including an annual grant of two thousand dollars from the State; and the expenses for the same period, at about thirty-eight hundred dollars. At this rate, with its present funds, the Institution will in a short time be in debt, unless further means be found for increasing its productive property, as the balance to the debit of expense account is about one thousand dollars a year.

ED. REYNOLDS,
R. W. HOOPER,
G. A. BETHUNE,
} *Surgeons of the Mass. Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary.*

BOSTON, Oct. 30, 1852.